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Human Rights Commission Minutes 05/19/2005

Human Rights Commission Meeting Minutes - Final

May 19, 2005

In Attendance: Marlissa Briggett, Christine Carney, Victoria Cohen, Christine Deshler, A. Nick Minton, Bill Shea, Nancy Sweeney

Absent:

Sheri Baron, Nancy Rhoads,

The meeting was called to order at 8:00 p.m.

The April minutes were approved and accepted.

1. **Community Open Forum** – Mark Rosenthal was unable to attend this meeting

Two students from the Arlington High School Gay/Straight Alliance spoke of their experiences at the High School:

Josh Bell is having a positive experience and feels rather safe despite racial and homophobic slurs, but in comparison, has a better feeling for the cluster teaching program that he experienced at Ottoson Middle School – the family atmosphere and close teacher involvement made for a much better sense of security – on the other hand –

Danica Spence spoke of how much she misses the secure/family spirit at the Ottoson and feels very unsafe at the High School – she senses that most teachers do not take the time to know the students or care much of the dangerous atmosphere that she observes – having metal detectors at the school appears intrusive to students (at this time there are none present on the property) - she spoke of the dangers of students who are known to carry knives and the fear that is created by knowing they exist is worrisome – she is very concerned about the few “gangster-like” students that make threats and racial slurs – so much so that she is seriously

considering changing schools next year.

The Commissioners had much discussion on this topic when the guests departed the meeting and Nancy Sweeney and Bill Shea will set up an appointment at the High School with Mr. Stephen Pereira (Metco) and Ms. Cynthia Bouvier (Health Education/Safe Schools) to address the concerns of these students

2. **Other Business** -

Christine Deshler distributed a well written letter she composed for publication in the Advocate titled "**Hate in Arlington**" – there were a few changes suggested and she will incorporate them before submitting the final copy

Vita Cohen distributed a draft of the ***Sensitivity flyer*** she has painstakingly created – she will incorporate some suggested changes for further review -

Complaint recently issued by Tracey Edwards has been ***removed***.

Prepared and submitted by:

Marylynn Carnell

Staff Assistant